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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to identify the self-reported factors affecting the career decision making of Mexican and Mexican-American students. It was hypothesized that the factor clusters would differ between the two sample populations, Mexican and Mexican-American. It was also hypothesized that these clusters would differ from six clusters identified by O'Neil et al. (1980) in their Midwestern United States sample. The total sample of 380 students was representative of Mexican-American students attending high school in Douglas, Arizona, as well as college preparatory students from Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico. Teachers in both locations administered the Career Factor Checklist (CFC) to the students in their classrooms. The CFC includes 28 items divided into the O'Neil scales and representative of the following factors: familial, societal, individual, socioeconomic, situational, and psychosocial-emotional. The factors were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Varimax rotation procedures were used to identify simple structure and factor invariance. Results showed different factors influencing the vocational aspirations of the two sample populations. It also appeared that these factors differed, especially for Mexican students, from those identified by O'Neil et al. The differences between the Mexican and Mexican-American students' responses may be due to acculturation. Counselors should consider both personality and environmental factors when working with these students. (TES)

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FACTORS AFFECTING CAREER DECISION MAKING
OF MEXICAN AND MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS

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The passage of a young person from adolescence to adulthood is marked by a number of events. Of these, none is more important than the young person's finding work and becoming economically independent (Dayton, 1981).

Before counseling psychologists can assist clients in their preparation for work and independence, they must be aware of the career factors influencing clients' decisions. However, the fundamental problem of assisting clients to understand the complexities of career decision making is the lack of specific information relevant to the factors influencing career choices.

The literature provides some general information regarding identified factors impacting upon the career decision making process of Mexican-American children.

First, Fields (1981) describes the importance of the Mexican-American mothers' perceptions of opportunity to the development of aspirations among their children. In general, where the ethnic status of Anglo mothers is most important for understanding their values, it is the perceptions which Mexican-American mothers have of opportunity which best explain their values. If Mexican mothers

experience frustrations, these frustrations do not seem to be translated into behaviors that have negative consequences for their children's occupational aspirations.

Second, Caraveo-Ramos (1982) states that the home environment and the social environments are important socializing agents providing Mexican-Americans with stimuli to pursue or not pursue particular educational and vocational objectives. He further concluded that family income is directly associated with educational attainments, and that the presence of more upper-income, non-agriculturally employed Mexican-Americans in the community enhances educational attainment.

Third, the literature empirically supports the fact that the level of acculturation and family style is one of the main determinants of the values and attitudes of the Mexican-American, specifically when dealing with vocationally related issues (Ramirez, 1967; Edington & Hays, 1978; Madsen, 1965; Bonnheim, 1977).

However, there is no particular response which seems to provide an adequate answer to the question of what factors influence the vocational aspirations of Mexican-Americans. Instead, one must realize that Mexican-Americans vary in their behaviors like any other ethnic group, and one must be careful to avoid stereotypes when dealing with questions about their vocational behavior (Caraveo-Ramos, 1982). Indeed, Grebler, et al (1970, p.437) notes that

. . . the findings in Mexico City may not hold

for the entire country any more than those for Angelenos and San Antonians hold for rural Texas or New Mexico. The tenacity of cultural values in Mexico seems to vary greatly between cities and rural areas and among cities of different size and economic growth.

There is limited empirical evidence on the factors influencing career decision making in the general population in the United States (O'Neil et al, 1980). However, there is no empirical evidence identifying the factors influencing the career decision making of Mexican and Mexican-American youth.

Research is needed to identify the correlates of career decision making and the specific problem areas that inhibit career choice. The identification, understanding, and empirical validation of the correlates affecting career decision making can facilitate the diagnosis of clients' problems in career counseling and the implementation of effective counseling interventions. Additionally, if the correlates can be understood in terms of acculturation, counseling treatments and prevention programs can be developed for Mexican and Mexican-American students at different acculturation levels.

The purpose of this research was to identify the self-reported factors affecting the career decision making of Mexican and Mexican-American students. It was hypothesized that the factor clusters would differ between the two sample populations --- Mexican and

Mexican-American. Second, it was hypothesized that these clusters would differ from the 6 clusters identified by O'Neil et al (1980) in their Midwestern United States sample.

METHOD

Subjects

The total sample (N=380) surveyed for this study is representative of Mexican-American students (N=259) attending high school in Douglas, Arizona, U.S.A. as well as college preparatory students (N=121) from Ciudad Obregon, Sonora, Mexico.

Teachers, in Arizona and Sonora, administered the Career Factor Checklist (CFC) developed by O'Neil, Meeker, and Borger (1978) to the students in their classrooms. The CFC was translated into Spanish for use with the Mexican students in Obregon.

Instrumentation

The CFC includes 28 items divided into six scales. Each of the 6 general factors and 22 subfactors is represented by one item on the CFC. Its format is a 5-point Likert scale and asks respondents about the degree to which the factors affect their career decision making.

The 6 scales are representative of the following factors: (a) familial, (b) societal, (c) individual, (d) socioeconomic, (e) situational, and (f) psychosocial-emotional. Hoyt (1941) reliability coefficients for the six scales of the CFC ranged from .65 to .81.

The factors were analyzed using the SPSS program. A principal components technique was used to extract factors. Varimax rotation procedures were used to identify simple structure and factor invariance.

RESULTS

In the Mexican student sample (N=121), using Eigenvalues greater than one as the cutoff, nine factors effecting career decision making were identified that explained 66.8 percent of the variance (See Table 1). These factors are very different from both O'Neil's findings and the Mexican-American sample (See Table 3). The factors identified by the Mexican students were:

1. Psychological
2. Societal
3. Familial
4. Socioeconomic
5. Situational
6. Peer Group Influences
7. Childhood Experiences
8. Attitudes
9. Race

In the Mexican American sample (N=259), using Eigenvalues greater than one as the cutoff, seven factors effecting career decision making were identified that explained 60.7 percent of the variance. (See Table 2). These factors were similar to but not identical with

O'Neil's findings (See Table 3). The factors identified by the Mexican-American students were:

1. Individual
2. Familial
3. Supply and Demands of Jobs
4. Mass Media
5. Race
6. Fear of Failure
7. Societal

Table 3 provides a visual comparison of the factors identified for each population.

SUMMARY

It appears that there are different factors influencing the vocational aspirations of Mexican and Mexican-American students. It also appears that these factors are different from the factors identified by O'Neil, et al in the Midwestern United States sample. The differences in the Mexican and Mexican-American students' responses may be due to acculturation. As the Mexican family/students become more influenced by the major culture, perhaps the children internalize more of the Anglo career ambitions.

Further research needs to be done in this area. If therapy is to be effective, therapists must consider both personality and environmental factors during career counseling with Mexican and Mexican-American clients.

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CAREER FACTOR CHECKLIST

Table 1

Mexican Students' Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 1	
Psychological	
Emotional, social, or personal problems that you have in your life.	.57
Fear of Failure	
Fear of being seen or judged as inadequate and unsuccessful.	.75
Fear of Success	
Avoiding success because of possible negative consequences.	.81
Lack of Assertiveness	
Lack of initiative to express yourself and to act in your own best interest.	.75
Lack of Confidence	
Lack of trust in your abilities and potential to be a success.	.63
Role Conflict	
Feelings of frustration over being pulled in opposite directions by your roles (such as career vs. family, career vs. parents' approval-disapproval, career vs. role as father, mother, wife or husband).	.66

Table 1 (continued)

Mexican Students' Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 2	
Societal Factors	
Society's values, attitudes, and practices related to appropriate career choices.	.52
Educational Experiences	
Educational institutions' values, attitudes, and practices related to appropriate career choices.	.48
Individual Factors	
Your abilities, interests, self expectancies, attitudes, and need to achieve.	.76
Self Expectancies	
What you expect of yourself related to possible careers now and in the future.	.83
Abilities	
All skills you have or can develop.	.63
Need to Achieve	
Your desire to accomplish certain goals in life.	.75

Table 1 (continued)

Mexican Students' Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 3	
Familial Factors	
Your family's values, attitudes and behaviors regarding appropriate career choices.	.81
Mother's Role	
Your mother's roles and attitudes related to family, career and work.	.76
Father's Role	
Your father's roles and attitudes related to family, career and work.	.78
Factor 4	
Socioeconomic Factors	
Your social, racial, and ethnic group and society's economic condition.	.84
Social Class	
The social and economic level of you and your family.	.77

Table 1 (continued)

Mexican Students' Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 5	
Situational Factors	
Unforeseen circumstances and events.	.74
Chance	
Unplanned or unpredictable events.	.78
Factor 6	
Peer Group Influences	
Values, attitudes and behaviors of your peers regarding appropriate career choices.	.80
Mass Media	
Values, attitudes, and behaviors depicted on radio and TV and in movies, books, and magazines regarding appropriate career choices.	.74

Table 1 (continued)

Mexican Students' Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 7	
Childhood Experiences	
Your early childhood experiences regarding appropriate career choices.	.73
Interests	
Specific activities and areas that arouse your curiosity or attention.	.68
Factor 8	
Attitudes	
Your perceptions and feelings about yourself and your role related to careers.	.79
Factor 9	
Race	
Your race.	.72

CAREER FACTOR CHECKLIST

Table 2

Mexican-American Student's Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 1	
Individual Factors	
Your abilities, interests, self expectancies, attitudes, and need to achieve.	.69
Self Expectancies	
What you expect of yourself related to possible careers now and in the future.	.72
Abilities	
All skills you have or can develop.	.80
Interests	
Specific activities and areas that arouse your curiosity or attention.	.78
Need to Achieve	
Your desire to accomplish certain goals in life.	.80
Attitudes	
Your perceptions and feelings about yourself and your role related to careers.	.75

Table 2 (continued)

Mexican-American Student's Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 2	
Familial Factors	
Your family's values, attitudes and behaviors regarding appropriate career choices.	.67
Childhood Experiences	
Your early childhood experiences regarding appropriate career choices.	.70
Mother's Role	
Your mother's roles and attitudes related to family, career and work.	.78
Father's Role	
Your father's roles and attitudes related to family, career and work.	.70

Table 2 (continued)

Mexican-American Student's Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 3	
Supply & Demand of Jobs	
Availability of jobs.	.55
Situational Factor	
Unforeseen circumstances and events.	.78
Chance	
Unplanned or unpredictable events.	.76
Course of Least Resistance	
Available options offering the least resistance, hard work, or difficulty.	.56
Factor 4	
Mass Media	
Values, attitudes, and behaviors depicted on radio and TV and in movies, books, and magazines regarding appropriate career choices.	.60
Lack of Assertiveness	
Lack of initiative to express yourself and to act in your own best interest.	.69
Role Conflict	
Feelings of frustration over being pulled in opposite directions by your roles (such as career vs. family, career vs. parents' approval-disapproval, career vs. role as father, mother, wife, or husband).	.61

Table 2 (continued)

Mexican-American Student's Factorial Structure

Factor	Factor Loadings
Factor 5	
Race	
Your race.	.80
Sex Discrimination	
Your experience of personal and societal discrimination on the basis of sex.	.72
Factor 6	
Fear of Failure	
Fear of being seen or judged as inadequate and unsuccessful.	.76
Fear of Success	
Avoiding success because of possible negative consequences.	.73
Factor 7	
Societal Factors	
Society's values, attitudes, and practices related to appropriate career choices.	.83
Educational Experiences	
Educational institutions' values, attitudes, and practices related to appropriate career choices.	.66

TABLE 3. Factor ranking for Mexican, Mexican-American, and Midwestern USA students

FACTOR	MEXICAN	MEXICAN-AMERICAN	MIDWESTERN USA
1	Psychological	Individual	Familial
2	Societal	Familial	Societal
3	Familial	Supply Demand of Jobs	Individual
4	Socioeconomic	Mass Media	Socioeconomic
5	Situational	Race	Situational
6	Peer Group	Fear of Failure	Psychosocial-Emotional
7	Childhood Experiences	Societal	-----
8	Attitudes	-----	-----
9	Race	-----	-----